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The lack of qualified English teachers is a pressing problem in Puerto Rico where, officially, English is taught in grades 1-12 one hour each schoc. day. Less than 17. of the primary grade teachers are qualified to teach English as a second language, yet because of their excellent methodology, they teach "very effectively their own faulty speech habits which become so deeply recorded in the language-susceptible nervous systems of the young children that they probably never can be erased." The program "Play With Me" described in this paper is an attempt to provide an opportunity for the children and teachers to hear English spoken by native speakers. It is a weekly half-hour television program transmitted from stations in San Juan and Mayaguez and received throughout Puerto Rico and the islands of Vieques and St. Thomas. In remote places, it is probably the only opportunity the children have to hear native English speakers. Coordinated inservice teacher-training sessions are held biweekly at three centers, using teachers from the Chicago Board of Education, and University of Illinois graduate students of TESOL as live models. The program aims to interest the children in learning English as a second language through songs, games, rhymes, stories, and activities linguistically designed to emphasize fundamental American English speech habits. (AMM)

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TELE-TESOL IN PUERTO RICO FOR THE PRIMARY GRADES

Virginia M. Welninski

Officially English is taught in Grades 1 through 12 in the public schools of Puerto Rico for one hour each day. Secretary of Education Ramon Mellado Parsons states that the teaching of English "is an essential part of Puerto Rican everyday life." Unfortunately, English teaching is being impaired by the lack of qualified English teachers, the lack of proper materials, the misuse of existing materials, and the resultant lack of student interest. Of these, the most pressing problem is the lack of qualified English teachers.

Less than 1% of the teachers in the primary grades are qualified to teach English; yet, in Grades 1 and 2, they are required to teach audio-lingually a language which they, themselves, cannot speak. Since their methodology is excellent, they teach very effectively their own faulty speech habits which become so deeply recorded in the language-susceptible nervous systems of the young children that they probably NEVER can be erased. Thus erroneous habits of stress, rhythm,

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intonation, and pronunciation that should be overcome, are PERPETUATED. The resulting SPANGLISH is practically unintelligible to native English speakers. For example:

/i a bu/	/daria ka/	/bikba po ru/
It's a book.	That is a cat.	Vick's Vaporub

/be prai/
best price

Our program PLAY WITH ME is a meager attempt to combat this problem by providing an opportunity for the children and teachers in the primary grades to hear English spoken by a native speaker.

PLAY WITH ME is a weekly half-hour television program transmitted in black and white from stations WIPR-TV in San Juan and WIPM-TV in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico. The program, presented LIVE on Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m., is videotaped and repeated on Thursdays at 2:00 p.m. The telecast is received throughout Puerto Rico as well as in the islands of Vieques and St. Thomas. In remote places, it is probably the only opportunity that the children have to hear a native speaker of English.

As a coordinate activity inservice teacher-training sessions are being held on alternate Tuesdays from 9 to 12 a.m.

at three centers for teachers who teach in different geographic and socio-economic areas within the San Juan Region of the Department of Education in Puerto Rico. Continental teachers from the Chicago Board of Education and graduate students from the University of Illinois Urbana Campus who are working toward a Master's Degree in teaching English as a second language are used as live models to present the English being taught. Each Continental is teamed with a Resident Teacher from the Curriculum Center of the San Juan Regional Office to work with a small group of three to six Puerto Rican teacher participants on the linguistic elements of English that are being emphasized in the telecast of **PLAY WITH ME.**

The scripts and teacher's guides for PLAY WITH ME are written by Mrs. Anatolia Matienzo, Resident Teacher in the Curriculum Center of the San Juan Regional Office of Instruction; Miss Rose Paccione, Operation Understanding Teacher from New York City; and Mrs. Virginia M. Welninski, TESL Consultant from the Chicago Board of Education. They work as a team consulting with linguists, psychologists, sociologists, supervisors, directors, technologists, and teachers to determine the content of the program and its implementation. The materials are tried out in the classroom before they are presented

on the air. Miss Rose Paccione also plays the role of MISS CANDY, studio teacher for PLAY WITH ME. The name MISS CANDY was chosen for its obvious appeal to children. Her costume is candy-striped to reinforce her identification.

Through the teacher's guides specific linguistic elements of English are brought to the attention of the classroom teacher so that she knows in advance what to listen for, what distortions she may expect in her pupils' production of English, and what to do to minimize such distortions. Contrasts and comparisons between Puerto Rican Spanish and American English speech habits are made so that the classroom teacher understands how and why certain errors occur and how and why they are to be dealt with.

Through the guide the classroom teacher is alerted to the contrasts in the structure, intonation, and phonology of spoken Puerto Rican Spanish and American English so that she can give special attention to them as she listens to the native English speaker on TV.

Example 1.

> The Puerto Rican Spanish speaker tends to omit or aspirate the final /s/ and /z/ sounds. In English these sounds are important and must be pronounced because they indicate
> verbs in contractions (It'<u>s</u>, She'<u>s</u> made)
> verbs in third person singular form (help<u>s</u>, goe<u>s</u>)

plurality of nouns (cat<u>s</u>, dog<u>s</u>)

relationship or possession (Pete'<u>s</u> classmates, John'<u>s</u> coat.)

<u>Example 2.</u>

In Spanish, subject pronouns are usually omitted because their meanings are conveyed by verb endings. In English, the subject pronouns (except in imperative sentences) MUST be stated. They may NOT be omitted.

<u>I</u> have a hat.	Teng<u>o</u> un sombrero.
<u>You</u> have a pretty face.	Tien<u>es</u> una cara bonita.
<u>He</u> has a shirt.	Tien<u>e</u> una camisa.
<u>It</u> (the table) has legs.	Tien<u>e</u> patas.
<u>We</u> have hats.	Tenem<u>os</u> sombreros.
<u>They</u> have skirts.	Tien<u>en</u> faldas.

PLAY WITH ME is designed to interest Puerto Rican primary-grade children in learning English as a second language through songs, games, rhymes, stories and activities designed to emphasize the fundamentals of American English speech habits - structure, intonation, rhythm, stress, and pronunciation - in the stream of speech of the native speaker. The controlled linguistic content capitalizes on the play element to lead the child to internalize these speech habits - to record them in his nervous system below the level of conscious awareness so that

they may operate spontaneously and effectively in appropriate situations at the proper time.

Emphasis on the play element is based on the psychological premise that more learning takes place when the child is personally involved in a gratifying experience. Play creates an atmosphere in which the child observes and listens attentively, reacts to the directions given, and participates actively in the program. This self-involvement in listening, speaking, and performing helps to develop the skills required in language learning.

Studio and classroom teachers share the responsibility for creating a climate favorable to learning. The resulting partnership challenges the classroom teacher to grow along with her television colleague. She plans carefully and makes herself stimulating both as a teacher and as a sympathetic, warm personality while supervising the learning process of her pupils.

To set the stage for learning by television the classroom teacher makes sure that the classroom and the TV set are ready for the best possible visual and auditory reception and that the physical set-up of the classroom is conducive to the

pupils' comfort and participation. She creates an atmosphere in which the children are quiet and relaxed, eager to watch and listen, and ready to participate in the activities suggested in the program.

To assure herself that the children learn as much as possible, the teacher prepares herself for the specific lesson and for her role in it by ascertaining from the teacher's guide the general content of the lesson and its place in the total English program.

In the week between telecasts, the classroom teacher introduces the children to those parts of the content which may cause difficulty in understanding. If the program involves the story of The Three Bears, The Three Little Pigs, The Little Red Hen, or Little Red Riding Hood, the classroom teacher tells the story in SPANISH one or more times during the week preceding the telecast in which it is to be used. Through familiarity with the story itself the child can then bring meaning to its English counterpart. If the program involves new expressions or concepts, the classroom teacher introduces these during the preceding week through related but preferably not identical activities, combining them with songs, verses, or games already known to the children.

As an example, to prepare for the action song **FIVE LITTLE GIRLS** being taught in Telecast 20, the following items were included in Telecast 19:

The words clapping and knocking were acted out in the **DOING SONG**;

The concepts of one less than each of these numbers, five, four, three, two and one were exemplified;

The chorus of the song **FIVE LITTLE GIRLS** was introduced with both girls and boys participating.

The concepts of swimming in the sea, jumping for you, and having no fun are new. The classroom teacher uses Spanish when necessary to clarify meanings - especially those that are difficult to exemplify such as having no fun, although this can be brought out by contrasting children participating in the activity with nonparticipants. The classroom teacher shows her pupils a picture of children swimming in the sea, elicits from the children their swimming experiences, and gets them to dramatize the swimming action. Using the **DOING SONG** melody taught in an earlier telecast, she has the children act out swimming, jumping, clapping, knocking, etc.

The classroom teacher motivates in her pupils a desire to view the broadcast at hand. She may ask any questions such as the following:

What was in the surprise box last week?

Was it a bus? Was it a valentine? Was it a book?

I wonder what MISS CANDY has in the surprise box today?

Will MISS CANDY teach us a new song today?

Will she play a game with us?

Let's look and listen.

During the telecast the classroom teacher views the program with her pupils and leads them to repeat, respond, react to, and perform according to MISS CANDY'S instructions. She circulates among the children giving personal attention to those who seem less able to participate in the broadcast. MISS CANDY serves as the model for the linguistic elements being emphasized in the lesson. The children and the teacher imitate or respond on cue. The teacher alerted through the teacher's guide, listens carefully to her pupils' production, makes a mental comparison with the model, notes any differences that result, and decides whether or not further practice is needed.

The teacher participates in the activities helping her pupils interpret the instructions given by MISS CANDY. By observing, repeating, and performing the fingerplays, action songs, poems, etc., she improves her own production of the English language, overcomes some of her timidity in using the language, learns many activities to add to her bag of teaching tricks, and shows the children that learning English can be fun.

Songs are carefully developed so that they reflect the sound system -- the stress, rhythm, and intonation patterns - of American English and are consistent with its speech patterns.

He - She Song

Masks - Does she have an ugly face No, she has a pretty face
an ugly face Does he have a sad,
an ugly face sad face?
Does she have an ugly face? No, he has a happy face
Tra-la-la-la-la

Cultural comparisons and contrasts are considered in developing the program content. Paralinguistic elements of the American culture are incorporated through the natural behavior of the continental TV teacher appropriate to the situation in which she finds herself.

When the program is finished and the set is switched off the lesson continues. As effortlessly as possible, the classroom teacher checks comprehension of the material envisioned in the telecast, using Spanish when necessary. She relates the new learnings with previous learnings, and insofar as possible, with the pupils' experiences outside of school. She pulls together as many threads of experience as she can, including the telecast just completed.

> PLAY WITH ME frequently uses the story-telling technique to carry the linguistic content of the telecast. Coherence is achieved by relating all activities within the program to the central theme, as in
>
> Telecast 17 - Little Red Riding Hood
>
> The program opens with a basket of food found in the surprise box, progresses to a little girl with a basket, then to Little Red Riding Hood and the story.

The action song dramatizes activities in the story -

> She's walking through the woods.
>
> She's picking flowers.
>
> She's knocking on the door.

I'm not afraid of the big, bad wolf.

You're not afraid of the big, bad wolf.

We're not afraid of the big, bad wolf.

He's not afraid of the big, bad wolf.

She's not afraid of the big, bad wolf.

He's not afraid of the big, bad wolf.

They're not afraid of the big, bad wolf.

Referring to the teacher's guide, the teacher finds suggestions for recombining the linguistic elements presented in the current telecast with those learned previously. Substitution drills, transformation exercises, dialogs, etc., are given in detail for the teacher's use should she wish to incorporate them in subsequent English lessons. The directions, words, and music for the fingerplays, action songs, games and so forth, are also included in the guides. Thus **PLAY WITH ME** enriches the ongoing English program and articulates with what the classroom teacher is expected to teach. **PLAY WITH ME** is a time for having fun while learning a maximum of English in a minimum of time.

Virginia M. Welninski
Chicago Board of Education
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